

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 064711

E. O. 11652: ADS, DECLAS 3/24/78

TAGS: ELAB PINT VS

SUBJ: AFL- CIO TALK WITH THIEU

REF: SAIGON 4895

1. AN AFL- CIO DELEGATION HEADED BY PRESIDENT GEORGE MEANY CALLED ON PRESIDENT THIEU AT BLAIR HOUSE THE EARLY EVENING OF APRIL 5. THE MEETING, LASTING ABOUT 40 MINUTES, WENT " VERY WELL," ACCORDING TO AFL- CIO SOURCES WHO WERE THERE.

2. AS AN EXAMPLE OF AFL- CIO CONTINUED SUPPORT OF A FREE VIETNAM, MEANY GAVE THIEU A COPY OF THE FEBRUARY 1973 AFL- CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON VIETNAM. MEANY DEVELOPED ONE OF THE THEMES OF THAT RESOLUTION, THE NEED " TO SUPPORT NOT ONLY DEMOCRATIC REFORMS BUT ALSO THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES," PARTICULARLY THE VIETNAMESE CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (CVT).

3. WHILE NOT CITING THE FEAR OF CVT PRESIDENT BUU THAT THIEU' S ASSOCIATES MIGHT FORM A NEW NATIONAL LABOR
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ORGANIZATION (REFTEL), MEANY MADE CLEAR THAT THE AFL- CIO HELD THE CVT AND BUU IN EXTREMELY HIGH REGARD. HE STRESSED THE VIEW THAT AN INDEPENDENT UNION MOVEMENT WAS ESSENTIAL TO A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY, AND RECALLED THAT HE HAD INTRODUCED BUU TO THREE AMERICAN PRESIDENTS.

4. IN RESPONSE TO THIEU' S QUESTION, MEANY AND ERNIE LEE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE AFL- CIO INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT, EXPLAINED THE WORK THAT THE AFL- CIO CARRIES ON WITH THE CVT THROUGH THE ASIAN- AMERICAN FREE LABOR INSTITUTE. THIS ENABLED ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION, TEDDY GLEASON, TO PUT IN A GOOD WORD FOR THE LONG- PROJECTED HIRING HALL FOR SAIGON AREA DOCK WORKERS.

5. BECAUSE OF AAFLI PLANS TO HELP DEVELOP CVT COOPERA- TIVES, MEANY AND LEE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT NEW LEGISLATION APPEARED TO BE NECESSARY ALLOWING PRIVATE GROUPS TO ESTABLISH PRODUCER AND CONSUMER COOPERATIVES

6. BESIDES MEANY AND GLEASON, THE OTHER EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS AT THE MEETING WERE LANE KIRKLAND, SECRETARY- TREASURER, AND HUNTER WHARTON, PRESIDENT OF THE OPERATING ENGINEERS AND SECRETARY- TREASURER OF AAFLI. BESIDES LEE, AFL- CIO STAFFERS PRESENT WERE JAY LOVESTONE, IRVING BROWN AND HARRY GOLDBERG. ROGERS

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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